

**December 2014**



Selected 1975 Chevelle Models



Malibu Classic Landau coupe



Malibu Classic four-door sedan



Laguna Type S-3 coupe



Malibu coupe



Malibu four-door sedan

I came across an article on Hemmings Daily yesterday which described how a school administrator is resurrecting his school's shop class which was closed almost 35 years ago. Just a few weeks ago, John D started a discussion on our forums about his high school shop class experience, and it got me thinking about my experience in shop class.

I actually got to experience our high school's shop classes while still in middle school. A group of us went on a one day "tour", and got to pick 4 electives to try. It was to give us a sampling of the classes we could take. I chose welding, automotive systems, blueprint making, and CNC machining. Since we were only 13-14 years old, none of us had any experience. After a short lesson, we were each given the chance to try MIG welding different types of joints as well as a chance to puddle melt/weld some steel too. I'm sure we all looked a little scared, but after our 40 minutes of class, we actually had gotten then hang of it. Our school also had a nice layout room where we learned how to draw a formal blueprint using compasses, rulers, etc all on proper drafting desks. When we were done, we got a true "blueprint" to bring home. The language class kids were jealous I'm sure.

Both of those classes were pretty neat, but they paled in comparison to the other two. Back in 1991, CNC machining at the school consisted of pretty basic commands which controlled a lathe in this case. We each got to program the machine to make a keychain from a solid piece of brass. I used that keychain for many years, and probably still have it.

The coolest part of the day was when we got to go back into the big auto shop area. My former High School had a Sun diagnostic system. We learned about the basics of an engine while it was hooked up to the analyzer. Each of us got to "drive" the car up to about 80mph which was pretty darn cool at that age. How did we do that? On the chassis dyno! To quote Ferris Bueller: *"They are so choice. If you have the means, I highly recommend picking one up."*

My school's shop has it's own trophy case too. More than engines are learned here.



Byron Frye was the shop teacher back when I was in school, and he was a real car guy at heart. I heard he had jockeyed his budget around to buy the dyno, supply the shop with Snap-On tools and the Sun Systems equipment, and taught something called “independent study” classes on top of the normal curriculum. The students in those classes helped design and build a Bucket T roadster which I think Mr. Frye financed himself. I don’t remember too many of the details anymore, other than the engine was a Lincoln 460 Interceptor. They widened the rear wheels, made the wood seat frame and dash themselves, and did as much as they could under his supervision. They got elective class credit and lots of valuable hand-on training. Guys also did their own 4x4 truck lifts there too. We learned how to Slim-Jim a car.

With all this nostalgia coming back to me, I was curious to see if he was still teaching or if the school’s program was still even around. I went onto the school’s website, tracked down the department, and found an email address for the current instructor. After carefully choosing my words so I didn’t sound creepy, I sent him an email explaining who I was and asked how the program was going. Here’s the response I got within an hour of sending it:

*Hi Bryan, Thanks for the e-mail. Yes the auto program is still going strong. Many changes though, just as cars have changed. The power absorption unit wore out on the dyno. I replaced it with a used one because parts were not available. It lasted only a short while and failed so I got rid of it. There is a motorcycle/ATV/snowmobile lift there now. Have 4 new lifts and a state of the art alignment system. Alldata subscription, Snap On Modis, etc. We run a business out of the shop where the students work on staff cars. Usually earn a couple thousand each semester. The students get a 50% commission at the end in the form of a gift card for craftsman tools. Nice to hear from you. I still keep in touch with Byron Frye. Rode in the T-bucket. Take care.*

I’m sure a lot of you have some sort of shop class experience from your school years, though some schools never had the space, budget, or even student interest to make it happen. At that point in my life, I never imagined myself working in the automotive industry. In fact, what drew me in was a simple Help Wanted ad I saw in the paper after my original career path collapsed. I certainly wouldn’t have predicted any of the success I have had, the people I have been fortunate to meet, or the close friends I have made because of it. I hope that the kids of today can get the introduction and experiences I had so that they can gain some valuable life skills and maybe even get them started on their own career.



Photo: Erin Adler, StarTribune

While searching for pictures to use, I found an article in the Star Tribune about my old high school’s shop class. Two students participated in the 2013 Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills competition at Hennepin Technical College, where they took second place in Minnesota. Competitors each had an identically “bugged” car that needed to be diagnosed and fixed in under 90 minutes. They were only one of two teams to complete the task. It’s really cool to see that the program is still continuing, but it looks like there

has been some downsizing. I hope it can stay a part of the curriculum. Not only are the students learning useful life skills, they may be laying the foundation for a great career as a mechanic, skilled craftsman, or even engineer.



# STEPPING INTO THE CONE ZONE



HELLWIG MOTORSPORTS DEVELOPS A CHASSIS STIFFENING KIT FOR 1964-1972 CHEVELLES

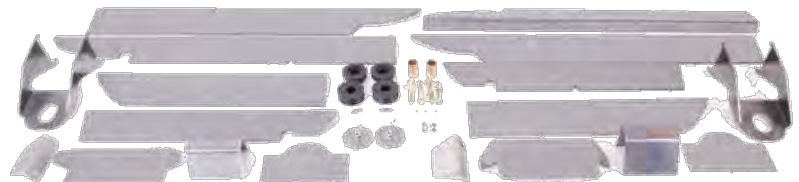
For all you aspiring cone-killers out there, here's a product you might be interested in. Hellwig Motorsports, a company well-known known for their sway bars, found that their bars were only as good as the chassis they were bolted to. One of Hellwig's engineers, David Wheeler, owns a '68 Chevelle and noticed that the torsional stiffness still left him dealing with twist and body roll. He set out to design a kit that addressed the issue without breaking the bank.

Sure, boxing in your frame is not a new idea, but Wheeler wanted a kit that didn't require body modification and would use the factory brake and fuel lines. What this kit does is use pre-cut pieces that overlap at the weld joints, and also extend the frame section inward to make a triangular shape and wider frame. This increases it's torsional rigidity. More details are available from Hellwig, but here's the highlights:

- 18 pieces of pre-cut steel
- An added center body mount section for added strength
- Body removal not required (but much easier to accomplish)
- Various transmission mount configurations
- Intermediate to experienced welding skills required
- 16-20 hours to install depending on skill
- \$350 or so for the kit



# FRAME FX



## Great Holiday gift ideas from Chevymall.com:



Chevelle emblem metal wall hanging. This sculpture has a brushed metal finish and is clear powder coated preserve its luster. Laser cut from 12 gauge steel. This unique, highly detailed brushed metal sculpture is unlike any Chevy collectible you've seen!

Available in two sizes: 15" width and 36" width

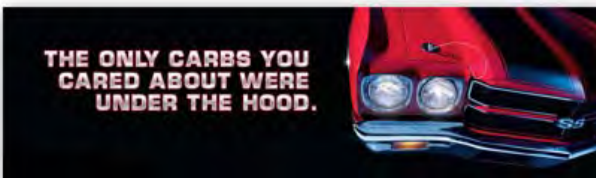
This Chevelle Muscle Car Neon Clock features a hand blown ring of real glass neon, generating 25 watts of light. The neon clock has a glass face and features chrome finished, multi-tiered art deco styles rims. The quartz movement clock operates on one AA battery (not included). The neon light is powered by an AC adapter (included) that plugs directly into a wall outlet. Give your home, garage or office the fabulous glow of real neon! Measures 15" in diameter with a 3" depth.



Who says you can't take a classic and mix it with a modern look? We did it with our Chevelle Power Shift Jacket!

Modern, designer style medium weight jacket with outstanding detail. It combines a high-function shell with a breathable inner mesh for a jacket that performs as well as it looks! We added a full embroidered Chevelle Emblem on the back and the classic Cross Flags from the Musclecar era on the left chest!

Loaded with detail: 78/22 nylon/cotton oxford shell, 100% polyester mesh upper body lining, 100% nylon taffeta lining on lower body and sleeve; locker loop, contrasting side panels, inside chest pocket with Velcro closure and lower slash pockets with tricot lining. Imported/USA



You loved them as posters, and were thrilled when we offered them as vinyl banners... there is no telling what you will do when you see our new Cruise Weekend Metal Signs! This wonderful Chevrolet Muscle Car billboard sign that was seen on Woodward Ave during Cruise Weekend is now being offered as high quality, vibrant metal sign.

Measuring 34" x 12", this metal sign is custom printed on a tough and durable metal substrate which has a high resolution detail and full color characteristics. Printed on 14 gauge steel and weighs 10 lbs! This is not a light-weight tin sign.

Rustproof and can used in outdoor harsh environments. This sign comes with 4 pre-drilled holes for easy mounting on your office, garage or shop wall. You will be amazed at the brilliant and vibrant color and quality of this sign!.